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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the public education governance structure in Utah. The role and influence of each of the central state actors in the organization and control of education in Utah--the state legislature, the governor, the State Board of Education, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction--are discussed in detail. In an effort to reduce its high student-teacher ratio, Utah recently appropriated funds to systematically reduce class size. In the second half of the paper, particular attention is given to the influence of those reforms enacted during the 1992 state legislative session. Chief among these reforms is the passage of the "Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997." This master plan represents a major effort to improve public education in Utah and appears to be a blueprint for future changes. The rationale, essence, and implications of the plan for Utah's public education system are examined. Two tables and four summary boxes are included. (LMI)

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The Organization and Control of Public Education in Utah

by

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Abstract

This paper examines the public education governance structure as it currently exists in the State of Utah. The central state actors in the organization and control of education in Utah are the State Legislature, the Governor, the State Board of Education, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction. The role and influence of each of these actors is discussed in detail. As of the 1991-92 academic year there were 769 public schools in Utah: 455 elementary schools, 114 junior high and middle schools, 98 high schools, and 112 special schools. Utah has one of the highest student/teacher ratios in the nation. In an effort to reduce this ratio, the State has recently appropriated funds to systematically reduce class size. Particular attention is given in the second half of the paper to the influence of those reforms enacted during the 1992 Utah Legislative Session. Chief among these reforms is the passage of the "Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997." This master plan represents a major effort to improve public education in Utah and would appear to be the blueprint for future changes in Utah's system of public education. Thus, the rationale, essence, and implications of this Plan for the public education system in Utah are examined.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The central state actors in the organization and control of education in Utah are the State Legislature, Governor, State Board of Education, and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction.

- On the basis of constitutional authority, the State Legislature is the most powerful educational policy-making body in Utah.

- There are 40 local school districts in Utah serving 454,164 students. These districts range in size from 184 to 79,366 students.

- Three districts in Utah -- Granite, Jordan, and Davis -- are among the 60 largest in the nation. Approximately 45% of Utah's students are enrolled in these three districts.

- During the 1991-92 academic year there were 769 public schools in Utah: 455 elementary schools, 114 junior high and middle schools, 98 high schools, and 112 special schools.

- The majority of Utah schools follow the traditional academic calendar. However, in response to growing enrollments, 10 districts have established year round schools. Approximately 16% of Utah's public school population attends year-round schools.

- Constitutional provisions exists for the creation of several "special" schools. Administered under the direct authority of the Utah State Board of Education, these include the School for the Deaf and Blind and the Applied Technology Centers.

- The "Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997" represents a major effort to improve public education in Utah and would appear to be the blueprint for future changes in Utah's system of public education.

- In an effort to improve its representativeness and effectiveness, the size and method of nominating individuals to the State Board of Education has changed significantly.

- The passage of the "Coordinated Services for At Risk Children and Youth Act" by the 1989 Utah Legislature represents an attempt to improve the delivery of educational and other social services through the collaborative and coordinative efforts of multiple social agencies.

- In an effort to ensure the prudent management of monies, the 1992 Utah Legislature enacted laws to protect the interests of public education in the management of school trust funds.

- Utah has one of the highest student/teacher ratios in the nation. In an effort to reduce this ratio, the State has recently appropriated funds to systematically reduce class size.

Governance of Utah's system of public education is more complex and interactive than might first appear. Linkages of coordination and control extend from the state house to the school house. While varying in strength, such linkages are comprised of a multitude of actors and agencies, each with its own set of roles, responsibilities, and interests. Standing above the state's 450,000-plus students are the legislature, a governor, the State Board of Education, a chief state school officer, the State Department of Education, hundreds of local board members, district superintendents, principals, teachers, and a vast array of special services. In addition to these key educational policy-makers, a variety of special interest groups at both state and local levels press for influence and control over the policy-making process.

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold: 1) to provide the reader with a general description of the organization and control of public education[1] in Utah; and 2) to identify significant trends and developments in the state that will have an impact on this structure in the immediate future. To accomplish these purposes, the chapter is divided into two major sections. The first section provides an overview of Utah's public education system, the second addresses recent trends and developments.

I. OVERVIEW

Constitutional Provisions

The Utah Constitution mandates that the legislature provide for the establishment of a state educational system. This includes both a public education system and a system of higher education.[2] The public school system must be open to all children of the state and include public elementary and secondary schools and such other schools and programs as the legislature may choose to designate. Public elementary and secondary schools are to be free, although the

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[1]Throughout this chapter "public education" is used in reference to the K-12 educational system in Utah.

[2] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 1

constitution authorizes the imposition of legislatively authorized fees in secondary schools.[3] Both systems must be free from sectarian control.[4] No religious or partisan test or qualification may be required as a condition of admission, attendance, or employment in the state's education systems.[5]

Constitutionally, the general control and supervision of the public education system is vested in a State Board of Education whose membership must be established and elected as provided by statute.[6] The constitution further establishes the office of a State Superintendent of Public Instruction who is to be appointed by the State Board of Education and who serves as the executive officer of the board.[7]

Central State Actors

Legislature

On the basis of constitutional authority, the state legislature is the central and legally most powerful educational policy-making body in Utah. The Utah Legislature is comprised of 104 members who meet annually, 75 in the House of Representatives[8] and 29 in the Senate.[9] All 75 Representatives are elected every 2 years.[10] Senators are elected to 4 year terms with

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[3] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 2

[4] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 1

[5] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 8

[6] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 3

[7] Ibid.

[8] Utah Code 36-1-4(3)

[9] Utah Code 36-1-1(3)

[10] Constitution of Utah, Article VI, section 3

approximately half being selected every 2 years.[11] The legislature meets in annual sessions which are not to exceed 45 calendar days.[12] The legislature may be called into extra sessions by the Governor.[13] Extra sessions may only consider those matters the Governor designates.[14]

Currently the Senate has 10 standing committees, two of which are concerned with education: one with higher education, the other with public education. Much like the Senate, the House has an equal number of standing and education committees.[15] Between sessions there are corresponding interim committees that meet jointly. These committees, which include a public education committee, are authorized to "meet after adjournment sine die of each general session to organize and plan study programs."[16]

Appropriations matters in the Utah legislature are handled by Joint Appropriations Committees. There are currently nine Joint Appropriations subcommittees, one of which deals with public education. All appropriations are brought together by the Executive Committee; the senator and representative who co-chair this committee are in a position to exercise great influence.[17]

Governor

Since the Utah Constitution places the general control and supervision of the public education system in the hands of the State Board of Education, the administration of public

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[11] Constitution of Utah, Article VI, section 4

[12] Constitution of Utah, Article VI, section 16

[13] Constitution of Utah, Article VII, section 6

[14] Ibid.

[15] Utah Code 36-12-2

[16] Utah Code 36-12-3, (see Utah Code 36-12-5 for specific duties of Interim Committees)

[17] See, State of Utah Directory: Forty-ninth Legislature 1991-1992 compiled and published by US West Communication

education is not part of the Governor's cabinet or executive departments under his/her direct management. However, the Governor is able to exercise control over public education in a variety of ways. These include the following: 1) the selection of the State Board of Education Nominating Committees, the selection of the two final candidates in each of the state board district elections,[18] and the appointment of individuals (with the consent of the State Senate) to fill vacancies on the State Board of Education;[19] 2) the power to appoint individuals to other boards that indirectly affect education, e.g. State Lands Trust Board; 3) the power to investigate (when the legislature is not in session) any executive office or state institution;[20] 4) the power to recommend legislation[21] including funding and to call extra sessions of the legislature;[22] 5) the power to approve or disapprove legislation;[23] and 6) the power, by virtue of the office, to help shape public opinion.

State Board of Education

The number and method of selection of members of the Utah State Board of Education has changed several times over the years. Effective, January 1, 1993, the number of board members was expanded from 9 to 15.[24] Each member is elected on a nonpartisan ballot[25] by

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[18] Utah Code 53A-1-103

[19] Utah Code 53-A-1-104

[20] Constitution of Utah, Article VII, section 5(2)

[21] Constitution of Utah, Article VII, section 5(3)

[22] Constitution of Utah, Article VII, section 6

[23] Constitution of Utah, Article VII, section 8

[24] Utah Code 53A-1-101 (1)(a)

[25] Ibid.

the voters in distinctive geographical districts.[26] State school board members serve for 4 years[27] with nearly half of the designated districts holding an election every 2 years.

The state constitution charges the State Board of Education with the general control and supervision of the public education system and the responsibility to appoint a State Superintendent of Public Instruction.[28] All other duties and powers emanate from statutory authority.

Superintendent of Public Instruction

The State Superintendent of Public Instruction has limited formal powers. Although a constitutionally created office,[29] the state superintendent is appointed by the State Board of Education and serves at the will and pleasure of the board. Statutorily, the state superintendent is to administer all programs assigned to the board, but in accordance with policies, procedures, and standards established by the board.[30] The state superintendent is also charged by statute to serve as an advisor to local superintendents and local boards of education in all matters involving the welfare of the schools.[31] When requested by local school superintendents or other school officers, the state superintendent is to provide written opinions on questions of public education,

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[26] Utah Code 53A-1-101 (1)(b)

[27] Utah Code 53A-1-101 (6)(a) and (b)

[28] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 3

[29] Ibid.

[30] Utah Code 53A-1-301 (1)

[31] Utah Code 53A-1-303 (1)

policy, and procedures, but not upon questions of law.[32] Opinions on questions of law may be secured by the state superintendent from the state attorney general.[33]

Local School District Characteristics

Utah, like 48 other states (Hawaii being the sole exception), has established a network of local school districts that serve as state agencies at the local level to administer public education. As creations of the state, local school districts can be dissolved, expanded, or modified as the legislature deems appropriate. Current statutory provisions also exist providing procedures whereby local school board members or local citizens can initiate action that can result in the consolidation or restructuring of school districts.[34]

At present, there are 40 local school districts in Utah serving 454,164 students. These districts range in student population size from 184 in Daggett School District to 79,366 in the Granite School District. Three districts in Utah--Granite, Jordan, and Davis--are among the largest in the nation. Taken together, 45% of all students in the state attend one of these three districts.[35] The 40 districts are all unified districts offering programs from kindergarten through twelfth grade.[36]

With the exception of Salt Lake City School District, all 40 districts are governed by a five-member board.[37] The Salt Lake City District has a seven-member board.[38] In addition,

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[32] Utah Code 53A-1-303 (2)

[33] Utah Code 53A-1-303 (3)

[34] Utah Code 53A-2-102

[35] In terms of pupil enrollments, these three school districts represent the 29th (Granite) 46th (Jordan), and 60th (Davis) largest districts in the nation (Digest of Education Statistics 1990, Table 88, p. 103).

[36] 1992 Utah School Directory published by the Utah State Office of Education.

[37] Utah Code 53A-2-106

[38] Ibid.

stipulations regarding a non-voting student member are provided by state statute.[39] Regular school board members are elected from separate and distinct geographical precincts within the geographical boundaries of their school district.[40] Local boards regulate the day to day management and operation of schools,[41] but in so doing serve two groups. First, they represent the local patrons who have elected them. Second, they serve as implementors of state laws and regulations governing public education. Since local boards have no inherent powers, they must look to enabling legislation and administrative directives from the State Board of Education for their legal responsibilities and authority.

Local boards are statutorily directed to appoint a district superintendent of schools[42] and a district business administrator.[43] The superintendent serves as the board's chief executive officer.[44]

School Characteristics[45]

During the 1991-92 academic year there were 769 public schools in Utah. These include 455 elementary schools, 114 junior high and middle schools, 98 high schools, and 112 special schools. Although there are 23 (excluding special schools) different organizational configurations among Utah public schools, the great majority of schools would be classified as elementary, junior

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[39] Utah Code 53A-3-105

[40] Utah Code 53A-3-101 (1)

[41] Utah Code 53A-3-402

[42] Utah Code 53A-3-301

[43] Utah Code 53A-3-302 (1)

[44] Utah Code 53A-3-301 (1)

[45] Data in this section including Table 1 and 2 are based on figures in the 1992 Utah School Directory published by the Utah State Office of Education.

or middle schools and high schools. The most common format within the state at each of these levels is as follows:

Elementary:	K-5 or K-6;
Junior High/Middle:	7-9, 6-8, or 7-8;
High School:	10-12 or 9-12.

Although accounting for only about one percent of the student population there are some 21 schools that follow a 7-12 organizational structure. These schools are found exclusively in rural Utah and their average enrollment size is only 219. As illustrated in Table 1, the average school enrollment within the state varies considerably depending upon the type of school and its location. The same is true for the range of enrollments. These are found in Table 2.

INSERT TABLE 1 HERE

INSERT TABLE 2 HERE

The majority of Utah schools follow a traditional late August through May calendar. However, largely in response to growing enrollments and space considerations, 10 school districts (Alpine, Cache, Davis, Granite, Jordan, Logan, Provo, Salt Lake City, San Juan, and Washington) have established year round schools. These include 79 elementary schools, 5 secondary schools, and 1 special school. A total of 73,020 children or approximately 16% of the state's enrolled public school age children are attending year round schools. The most popular or common year

round schedule is the 45-15[46] modified model which is utilized by 70 of the state's 85 year round schools. Average enrollment in Utah's year round schools is 856 with a range of 161 to 1,487.

Other Public Schools and Organizational Structures

Under constitutional authorization and encouragement to establish "such other schools and programs which the legislature may choose to designate"[47] the legislature has established a school for the deaf,[48] a school for the blind,[49] and a program of applied technology. The governance and control of the School for the Deaf and Blind is vested in a board of trustees which consists of the entire State Board of Education.[50] This school is located in Ogden with an extension division in Salt Lake City. The State Board of Education has also been designated by the legislature to serve as the State Board for Applied Technology[51] and to establish minimum standards for applied technology programs.[52] There are currently five Applied Technology Centers. They are located in Logan, Kaysville, Ogden, Richfield, and Roosevelt.

Another organizational unit operating within the public school structure of the state is the Regional Service Center. Authorized and established by the State Board of Education under its constitutional power of "general control and supervision,"[53] there are currently four such Centers

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[46] That is, 45 days in school and 15 days out of school or 9 weeks in school and 3 weeks out of school.

[47] Constitution of Utah, Article X, section 2

[48] Utah Code 53A-25-101

[49] Utah Code 53A-25-201

[50] Utah Code 53A-25-104, 53A-25-203

[51] Utah Code 53A-15-201

[52] Utah Code 53A-15-202

[53] Utah Administrative Code R300-456.2

functioning. The mission of these Centers is to serve school districts in cooperative projects such as purchasing, media services, inservice, and special education.[54]

Professional Education Organizations

There are a number of organized professional educational associations and groups operating within the state. The only statutorily created unit is the Utah School Boards Association.[55] This organization includes in its membership the State Board of Education and the members of the 40 local boards of education. It is a cooperative organization that works together on activities and problems relating to the state's educational system. Boards are authorized by law to expend state and district funds to support the activities of the association.

Closely linked with the School Boards Association is the Utah School Superintendents Association, which includes the State Superintendent, Superintendents of the 40 local school districts, the Superintendents of the Applied Technology Centers, as well as the Superintendents of the State School for the Blind and Deaf. The majority of the funding for this association comes from the Utah School Boards Association.

Another organization receiving direct state and district financial support is the Utah High School Activities Association. The Association represents a cooperative and is organized under the authority of the 40 local public school districts and the trustees of the participating private schools. The purpose of the organization is coordinate the various extra-curricular activities of public and participating private schools across the state, e.g. athletics, drama, forensics, music, etc.

Major privately organized professional educational organizations and associations actively serving Utah education and Utah educators include: the Utah Education Association, which boasts a membership that includes over 80% of the state's classroom teachers; the Utah affiliate

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[54] Utah Administrative Code R300-456.1B

[55] Utah Code 53A-5-101

of the American Federation of Teachers; the Utah Parent Teacher Association; the Utah Association for Adult, Community, and Continuing Education; the Utah Association of Elementary School Principals, the Utah Association of School Business Officials; the Utah Association of Secondary School Principals; the Utah Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development; the Utah Middle Level Association; the Utah School Employees Association; Utah Home Schools Association; the Utah School Counselors and Vocational Guidance Association; the Utah Vocational Association; and the Utah Vocational Directors Association.

II. TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ORGANIZATION AND CONTROL OF PUBLIC EDUCATION IN UTAH

Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan

In January of 90 a concurrent resolution by the Utah legislature created a task force charged with developing a 5-year strategic plan for education. The subsequent work of this task force resulted in the creation of the "Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997." This broad ranging plan, adopted and approved by the 1992 Legislature, represents a major effort to improve the system of public education in Utah and would appear to be the blueprint for the construction of future legislation in education. What follows is a description of the Task Force on Strategic Planning for Public and Higher Education and its work as expressed in the Strategic Plan.

Task Force on Strategic Planning

As created by law, the Task Force on Strategic Planning for Public and Higher Education is a 25 member committee charged with the responsibility of: 1) developing a strategic plan for public education in Utah; 2) monitoring and evaluating the progress of public education in the realization of this plan until December of 1997; and 3) issuing an annual report to the state

regarding its own evaluation of strategic planning in public education.[56] To insure the fair representation of educational interests on the committee, i.e. business, industry, government, education, parents, and students, specific guidelines regarding committee composition were enumerated by the Utah Legislature.

The Strategic Planning Process

With the aid of a professional consultant, the Task Force began its formal efforts to create a strategic plan in August of 1990. The steps used to develop the Strategic Plan and the work produced by the Task Force are summarized in the boxes below.[57]

INSERT SUMMARY BOX 1 HERE

Purpose and Essence of the Strategic Plan

Building upon the foundation of previous state efforts, the stated purposes of the report issued by the Task Force for Strategic Planning in January of 1992 reflect visionary and guidance functions.[58] These functions are discernable in the following quotes from the report: ". . .to create a bold new vision for the future of Utah Public Education;"[59]. . ."[to] convey not only a

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[56] Utah Code 53A-1a-202

[57]Committee Report. Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997: A Strategic Guide for the Future Development of the Public School System. Salt Lake City, Utah: Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst, January 1992.

[58]The visionary nature of the Strategic Plan is built to a great extent on the previous work of an earlier strategic planning committee commissioned in 1988 by the Utah State Board of Education. The report generated by this committee was entitled, A Shift in Focus, November 1988.

[59]Committee Report, pp. 7f.

vision, but a clear path for making that vision a reality;"[60]. . .and "to be a resilient and flexible guide to leaders, policy makers and administrators for aligning Public Education's structure and systems with those fundamental principles of effective leadership and management."[61]

To capture the essence of its content, it is necessary to examine three critical components of the Strategic Plan, each of which builds on the other: the Mission Statement, Strategic Plan Objectives, and Strategies for the Realization of Objectives.[62] The first component of the plan, as articulated by the Task Force, is the Mission Statement for Utah's system of public education.

INSERT SUMMARY BOX 2 HERE

This collective perception of the fundamental purpose and function of public education serves as the basis for the two critical components that follow. As is readily evident, several identifiable themes emerge from the Statement: world class educational quality, outcome-based learning, marketable work skills, character education, local school autonomy, choice, and accountability.

The second component which further defines the essence of the Strategic Plan is the objectives for public education identified by the Task Force. As noted in the report, these objectives represent the measurable and demonstrable end-results that are indicative of the accomplishment of the stated Mission. [63] Examination of these objectives reveals the high expectations held by the Task Force for Utah's system of public education: the student's

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[60]Committee Report, cover letter.

[61]Committee Report, p.7.

[62]Committee Report, pp. 13-15.

[63]Committee Report, p. 14.

achievement of his/her own educational objectives; successful employment following graduation; worldwide educational quality, and high working incomes.

INSERT SUMMARY BOX 3 HERE

Those broadly-stated strategies for deploying resources toward the realization of stated objectives constitute the third critical component of the Strategic Plan. Eleven strategies were articulated by the Task Force.

INSERT SUMMARY BOX 4 HERE

Close examination of these 11 strategies reveals the Plan's focus on various aspects of the state's education system, e.g., finance structure, curriculum, personnel, technology, testing, research and development, public relations, etc. Of primary importance, however, is the willingness and commitment reflected in the Plan to: 1) redesign, as is necessary, the organizational and governing system of public education to meet the Mission Statement and Objectives of the Strategic Plan (Strategy I); 2) align the organization of the educational system of Utah with outcome-based and accountability measures (Strategies I, IV, VII); and 3) the decentralization of authority to individual school sites for the purposes of meeting the objectives of the state (Strategies I, IV). Represented in these emphases are two seemingly counter-veiling trends: a centralization of accountability means and measures to the state level and a decentralization of authority regarding the delivery of education to the local level. Consistent

with the character of the Strategic Plan, such trends could contribute to the emergence of a centrally directed, yet locally autonomous educational governance structure in Utah.

Current State of the Strategic Plan

As noted above, the five year Strategic Plan for public education as developed by the Task Force on Strategic Planning was approved by the 1992 Utah Legislature. This approval may be interpreted as a commitment by the state government to move ahead with the Plan. While certain components are currently in place, e.g., Educational Technology Initiative, Career Ladder structure, State-wide Testing Initiative, School Choice Alternative, etc., it is reasonable to assume that the Plan will serve as a blueprint to guide the construction and implementation of future education legislation. As of January 1993 specific details regarding the full implementation and costs of the Strategic Plan remain illusive. While the Strategic Plan is an integral part of his educational reform package, the newly elected Governor has promised not to raise taxes to finance its effectuation.

Organizational and Structural Implications of the Strategic Plan

While the full extent of system reorganization has yet to be realized, two significant pieces of legislation--both consistent with the spirit of the Strategic Plan--were recently passed by the Utah Legislature. Each has implications for the organization and structure of education in the state. The first piece of legislation focuses on school choice. Effective January 1, 1993, Utah students will be allowed to seek enrollment in the public school of their choice.[64] Such choice, however, is not without its limitations. Local school boards must by law adopt specific standards for acceptance and rejection of applications.[65] Standards may include the capacity of program, class, grade level, or school building. In addition, a local school board may, by resolution,

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[64]Utah Code 53A-2-207 to 213

[65]Utah Code 53A-2-209

determine that nonresident students may not attend any of its schools.[66] As of yet, no additional funds have been appropriated by the state for the transportation costs incurred by this plan.

In addition to the passage of a school choice bill, $800,000 was appropriated by the 1991 Legislature to assist public elementary and secondary schools in implementing site-based decision making pilot programs.[67] A total of 16 schools were designated to receive the funds over a three year period. Granted flexibility and exemption from certain state and local regulations, these pilot schools were encouraged to experiment with different strategies to meet the academic goals of their school. Taken together, such initiatives reflect the spirit of the Strategic Plan and are perhaps indicative of future legislation relating to the decentralization of the educational delivery system in Utah.

Selection Procedures for the State Board of Education

Beginning in 1992 the method of nominating individual members to the State Board of Education changed significantly.[68] By May 1 of each election year, the governor selects a seven member nominating committee for each district where an election is scheduled to be held.[69] Members of the nominating committee must reside in the state board district. One member must be serving on a local school board within the state board district, another must be employed as a school district or public school administrator, a third must be employed as a public school teacher, a fourth must be someone who belongs to a parent association that provides direct and ongoing support to public schools within the district, and the three remaining appointees are to be

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[66]Utah Code 53A-2-207 (2)(a)

[67]Utah Code 53A-15-502 (1)

[68] Utah Code 53A-1-101 (6) (a) and (b)

[69] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (1)

individuals that represent various economic interests and the public at large.[70]

By August 1 of an election year, the nominating committee must submit a list of no fewer than three candidates and no more than five to the governor.[71] The committee has the responsibility to prepare a list of potential candidates from which the nominees given to the governor will be selected. However, individuals wishing to being considered may submit their own names to the committee prior to June 15 of the election year.[72] By September 1, the governor must then narrow each list to two candidates.[73] If the governor fails to do so, the nominating committee assumes the responsibility.[74] Nominating committees serve for a 1 year term.[75]

This rather complicated nominating process was the result of several years of policy debate regarding how to assure a stronger and more competent State Board of Education. Some have argued that the State Board of Regents, which governs higher education in the state and which is appointed by the Governor with Senate approval, constitutes a more high powered and competent body than the State Board of Education, which has in recent times been an open elected office. The new system is a compromise between those who favored appointment to office and those who felt it should remain an open nonpartisan position nominated and elected by the citizenry. The increase in the number of board members from 9 to 15 makes the body equal in membership to the State Board of Regents. It is also anticipated that the increased membership will result in the body operating more through standing committees like the Board of Regents and thereby

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[70] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (2)

[71] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (5)

[72] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (6)

[73] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (9)

[74] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (10)

[75] Utah Code 53A-1-103 (3)

result in less open bickering in Board meetings than has been the case in recent years. The November 1992 election has put the system into place. The results will become evident with the passage of time. The nomination system is unique among the 50 state systems.

Coordinated Services

Many organizations have joined nationally in a major movement to improve the delivery of educational and other social services through collaborative efforts.[76] Although the Utah involvement is currently not as far along or as aggressive as it is in other states, the Utah legislature in 1989 enacted the "Coordinated Services for At Risk Children and Youth Act." By this act,

> It is the declared. . . policy of the state of Utah . . . to unite the Department of Human Services, the State Office of Education, and the Department of Health to develop and implement comprehensive school-based systems of service for each at risk student in grades kindergarten through three and the student's family in order to help prevent academic failure and social misbehavior.[77]

The act establishes a State Council for At Risk Children and Youth, authorizes local committees initiated through elementary school principals, and authorizes pilot prevention and early

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[76] Perhaps the most noted organization in this respect is the Education and Human Services Consortium, which consists of the American Public Welfare Association, Center for Law and Social Policy, Center for the Study of Social Policy, Child Welfare League of America, Children's Defense Fund, Council of Chief State School Officers, Council of Great City Schools, Education Commission of the States, Family Resource Coalition, Institute for Educational Leadership, Joining Forces, National Alliance of Business, National Assembly of National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organizations, National Association of Counties, National Association of Secondary School Principals, National Association of State Boards of Education, National Conference of State Legislatures, National Governors' Association, National League of Cities, National School Boards Association, National Youth Employment Coalition, U.S. Conference of Mayors, Wider Opportunities for Women, and the William T. Grant Foundation Commission on Work, Family and Citizenship.

This coalition has published several publications including: New Partnerships: Education's Stake in the Family Support Act of 1988, What It Takes: Structuring Interagency Partnerships to Connect Children and Families with Comprehensive Services, and Thinking Collaboratively: Ten Questions and Answers to Help Policy Makers Improve Children's Services.

[77] Utah Code, 63-75-2

intervention programs. A 1992 amendment[78] to the law requires the state council to make rules to ensure cooperative development of a single coordinated plan for at risk students and their families for services required under the pilot programs authorized by the act. It further clarifies the role and use of records by the case management team.

There are currently (November 1992) 34 Schools in 8 separate school districts participating in the program. However, legislation is pending that would: 1) increase the number of schools to approximately 200; 2) extend the grade level from K-3 to K-6; 3) authorize the piloting of two middle/junior high programs and two hospital based programs; 4) bring the Juvenile Court system into the program as the 4th cooperating agency; and 5) establish a steering committee composed of the department heads of the participating agencies and representatives from various advocacy groups.[79]

State Lands Trust Management

Another significant change in the structure of the public education system in Utah focuses on the management of the state's school and institutional Trust Lands.[80] With the Utah Statehood Enabling Act of 1896, approximately 10% of all acres (5.8 million) within the state were entrusted by the federal government to state care. Consistent with the original intent of the Act, monies generated from the sale and lease of this land were to be committed to a trust fund earmarked specifically for the support of the public education system of Utah. Since its creation, however, questions from the public regarding the management of this Trust have arisen. Such concerns focus on those motivating principles guiding State Lands Trust decisions, e.g., have

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[78] See Utah Code, 63-75-4 (5)

[79] Based on a November 10, 1992 telephone conversation with Mary Ann Williams, Director of the At Risk Program, Office of the State Board of Education.

[80]Utah Code 65A-1-1

the interests of public education historically been the primary motivating factors of such decisions? According to a recent legislative audit, sales of Trust lands in non-competitive deals with local governments and private developers have cost public schools more than $1 million in revenues.[81]

In an effort to ensure the prudent management of monies generated from this Trust and to prevent the diversion of assets to other beneficiaries not designated by the Act, the 1992 Utah Legislature enacted laws to protect the interests of public education in the management of Trust Lands. The legislation which emerged had as its focus: 1) the restructuring of the process by which members are nominated to the Board of State Lands and Forestry; and 2) the rearticulation of the guiding principles for trust management.

As the agent responsible for the management of the state Trust Lands, the Board of State Lands and Forestry consists of 11 members. Whereas the state superintendent of public instruction (or the superintendent's designee) is an automatic member of this Board, the remaining 10 members serve at the pleasure of the Governor.[82] The manner in which these 10 members are nominated to the Governor was the focus of change for the 1992 Legislature. According to the new law, a 9-member nominating committee is charged with submitting a list of candidates to the Governor for each of the 10 positions. To ensure that the interests of education are represented in the nominating process, four of the nine members of the nominating committee are to be selected by the State Board of Education. In terms of the rearticulation of the guiding principle of management, the State Legislature specifically assigned the Board of State Lands and Forestry the responsibility of administering school and institutional Trust Lands in a

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[81]See report 9209 by the Office of the Legislative Auditor Performance Audit: Division of State Lands and Forestry. November 12, 1992.

[82]Utah Code 65A-1-3 (1)

"manner which makes the interests of the original beneficiaries (the public school system) paramount."[83]

As noted above, the legislative intent of these changes is to give public education a stronger voice in the selection of trust board members and to guarantee that beneficiary interests receive top priority in management decisions.

Class Size Reduction

For over a decade Utah has had the highest student/teacher ratio in the nation.[84] In an effort to address this condition, the Utah legislature began in the 1989-90 academic year to appropriate funds expressly earmarked for a systematic class size reduction. For a description of the plan and results to date see the chapter in this publication entitled "Education Personnel Issues and Development in Utah."

These five initiatives -- the Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan 1992-1997, the alteration of nominating and selection procedures for the State Board of Education, the Coordinated Services for At Risk Children and Youth Act, the revision of guidelines regarding the management of the State Lands Trust, and the reduction of class size -- represent trends of immediate significance to the public education system of Utah.

III. CONCLUSION

As noted above, the purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a general description of the organization and control of public education in Utah and to identify significant trends and developments that will have an impact on this structure in the immediate future. To this end, several characteristics of Utah's public education system have been noted: 1) The Utah

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[83]Utah Code 65A-1-2 (4)(a)

[84] See National Education Association publications on Ranking of States

Constitution mandates that the State Legislature provide for the establishment of a state educational system; 2) The central state actors in the organization and control of education in Utah are the State Legislature, the Governor, the State Board of Education and the State Superintendent of Public Instruction; 3) On the basis of constitutional authority, the State Legislature is the central and legally most powerful educational policy-making body in Utah; 4) As creations of the State, local school districts function as agents of the State in the administration delivery of public education; 5) There are 40 local school districts in Utah serving 454,164 students. These districts range in size from 184 to 79,366 students; 6) During the 1991-92 academic year there were 769 public schools in Utah: 455 elementary schools, 114 junior high and middle schools, 98 high schools, and 112 special schools; 7) The majority of Utah schools follow the traditional academic calendar. However, in response to growing enrollments, 10 districts have established year round schools; 8) Constitutional provisions exists for the creation of several "special" schools. Administered under the direct authority of the Utah State Board of Education, these include the Schools for the Deaf and Blind and the Applied Technology Centers. 9) While a number of organized professional education associations exists with the State, the only statutorily created unit is the Utah School Boards Association.

Likewise, several trends of immediate significance to Utah's system of public education were also noted: 1) The "Utah State Public Education Strategic Plan, 1992-1997" represents a major effort to improve public education in Utah and would appear to be the blueprint for future changes in Utah's system of public education; 2) In an effort to improve its representativeness and effectiveness, the size and method of nominating individuals to the State Board of Education has changed significantly; 3) The passage of the "Coordinated Services for At Risk Children and Youth Act" by the 1989 Utah Legislature represents an attempt to improve the delivery of educational and other social services through the collaborative and coordinative efforts of multiple

social agencies; 4) In an effort to ensure the prudent management of monies, the 1992 Utah Legislature enacted laws to protect the interests of public education in the management of school trust funds; 5) Utah has one of the highest student/teacher ratios in the nation. In an effort to reduce this ratio, the State has recently appropriated funds to systematically reduce class size.

Taken together, these noted features, characteristics, and trends provide the reader with a general description of the organization and control of public education in Utah.

Tables and

Summary Boxes

Table 1: Average School Enrollments in Utah Public Schools 1991-1992

	Elementary	Junior/Middle	High Schools	Special
Wasatch Front[1]	655	1102	1704	101
Non Wasatch Front	349	608	514	32
State-wide	548	912	1,012	82

[1] The phrase "Wasatch Front" is used by a number of state agencies to categorize those areas of the state along the western front of the Wasatch Mountain Range. The major of the state's population is found in this area. At this point, standard and discreet boundaries of this area have not been defined. In this chapter, "Wasatch Front" is used in reference to the following school districts: Weber, Ogden, Davis, Salt Lake City, Granite, Murray, Jordan, Alpine, Provo, and Nebo.

Table 2: Range of School Enrollments in Utah Public Schools, 1991-1992

	Elementary	Junior/Middle	High Schools	Special
Wasatch Front[1]	58-1215	344-1900	478-2687	1-572
Non Wasatch Front	6-938	92-1436	9-1760	2-142
State-wide	6-1215	92-1900	9-2687	1-572

[1]Wasatch Front School Districts are as follows: Weber, Ogden, Davis, Salt Lake City, Granite, Murray, Jordan, Alpine, Provo, Nebo School Districts.

Summary Box 1

STEPS USED TO DEVELOP THE STRATEGIC PLAN

1. **Belief articulation** - The articulation of 19 belief statements that express the fundamental values underlying the Strategic Plan.

2. **Mission Statement** - The articulation of mission statement for Utah's system of public education.

3. **Analysis of Utah's Public Education System** - An in-depth internal (i.e. educational governance system) and external (i.e. state economic, social, and demographic trends) analysis of Utah's system of public education.

4. **Identification of Critical Threats and Opportunities** - The identification of those threats and opportunities facing Utah's system of public education.

5. **Articulation of Educational Objectives** - The articulation of four objectives for Utah's system of public education.

6. **Articulation of Strategies** - The articulation of 11 strategies for achieving the educational objectives noted above.

7. **Action Plan Development** - Following the articulation of the strategies noted above, a 20 member team was assigned for each of the 11 strategies. Committees were charged with developing detailed plans for translating each strategy into action.

8. **Review and Final Agreement of Proposed Action Plans** - The Task Force met in November of 1991 to reach final agreement on the action plans proposed by the 11 action plan committees, to make recommendations concerning the responsibility for each plan, and to assign a proposed phase-in period for each.

Summary Box 2

Mission Statement
Public Education's mission is to assure Utah the best educated citizenry in the world and each individual the training to succeed in a global society, by providing students with learning and occupational skills, character development, literacy, and basic knowledge through a responsive, state-wide system that guarantees local school communities autonomy, flexibility and client choice, while holding them accountable for results.

Summary Box 3

Strategic Plan Objectives
1. One hundred percent of Utah's students will achieve the objectives of their individually developed Educational/Occupational Plans.
2. Each student departing the public schools will achieve success in productive employment and/or further education.
3. Utah education will be the standard world wide.
4. Utah will achieve the highest per household income in America.

Summary Box 4

Strategies For Realization of Objectives	
I.	We will redesign the educational system, its organization, laws and funding formulas, including removing state and local barriers, to achieve our mission and objectives.
II.	We will develop a world-class curriculum that enables students to successfully compete in a global society.
III.	We will energize our system of public education by attracting and retaining educators from among our best and brightest citizens through an aggressive plan to elevate its stature as a profession and compensate in a competitive way.
IV.	We will empower each school to create its own vision and plan to achieve results consistent with the mission and objectives of Utah public education.
V.	We will create the environment and provide the training necessary for school communities to achieve their mission.
VI.	We will employ technology to restructure and improve the teaching/learning process and its delivery.
VII.	We will install an assessment information retrieval system that will provide students, parents and educators with reliable, useful and timely data on the progress of each student.
VIII.	We will educate all stake-holders on the mission and objectives of public education in Utah.
IX.	We will personalize education for each student.
X.	We will support research and development throughout the system with emphasis on initiatives at the local school level.
XI.	We will expand and strengthen school/business partnerships that support our mission.